

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
May 15, 2012**

**PRESENT:** Thomas M. Jacob, Chairman  
Michael J. Retzky, Vice Chairman  
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member  
David C. DiCicco, Member  
Patricia M. Carey, Director  
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

**ABSENT:** Andrea L. Shorthose, Member

**GUESTS:** Bob Cohen, DeFazio Neighbor  
Nancy Sterling, Katy Dirks, Jo-Anne Ochalla, Community  
Center of Needham Committee

The meeting convened at 7:00PM in the Charles River Room located in the Public Services Administration Building.

1. **Minutes of Meeting of April 23, 2012; April 23, 2012 Re-organization Meeting; May 7, 2012:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2012; April 23, 2012 Re-organization Meeting; May 7, 2012 meetings. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved.
2. **Director's Report:** Submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Ms. Carey reported that a few citizens attended the Finance Committee meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup> to ask for funds for the Newman Playground from Town Meeting. Mr. DiCicco expressed his concern that this group is looking for funding for the Newman Playground while the Greene's Field Playground renovation which was on the Town Capital Plan did not request Town funding. It is not known which article the proponents would choose to decrease funding in order to fund their request. Ms. Carey reported the current Newman playground will be removed in June but at this time the playground committee has not chosen a vendor or a plan design. If this issue comes up at Town Meeting, Mrs. Chaston volunteered to speak on behalf of the Commission.
3. **Assistant Director's Report:** Discussed later in the meeting.
4. **Discussion Items:**
  - A. **Community Center of Needham Committee:** Mrs. Jo-Anne Ochalla reviewed the goals of the Needham Community Center Committee. Initially committee members met with Ms. Carey and she suggested they contact other communities to learn about the community center process. One of the missions was to not duplicate what is already in Needham but to find out what the Town and other community groups are already

doing and determine what needs aren't being served. The next step was to choose a priority of where to start. Mrs. Nancy Sterling, President of the Community Center Committee noted that there is a broad section of the community represented on the committee. She asked if any progress has been made regarding the Rosemary Feasibility Study. Mr. Jacob mentioned he would like to see the Rosemary Feasibility Study move forward but there has been no formal discussion at this time. Ms. Carey will be meeting with the Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick to discuss how to proceed. He also suggested broadening the scope of the current pool to include looking at other potential pool locations. Mrs. Chaston indicated a lot of energy has been expended to keep Rosemary Pool up and running taking into consideration equipment repairs and recent legal issues which is one of the reasons the Feasibility Study has been delayed. Mrs. Katy Dirks added that Rosemary Pool is a critical resource to the community and would like to move forward while so many people are energized and interested in a new facility. She recognized the benefits of employing many young people, the affordability of season memberships and the importance of the swim lessons offered at the pool. She also noted a new facility could encourage residents who have joined pools in neighboring towns return to Needham to swim. A year round pool could be achieved by putting a bubble over the pool. Depending on the rules of the Feasibility Study the scope could increase with funding from other sources. Mrs. Dirks asked about the Feasibility Study timeline and how the Community Center Committee could be involved. Ms. Carey explained that the project would be overseen by the PPBC with a working group. It is usually a 6-8 month range from hiring a company to receiving the report. Mr. DiCicco asked what the Committee is looking to build. Mrs. Dirks indicated ideally an indoor/outdoor swimming facility, gyms, programming space for youth of middle school and high school ages, an indoor walking track, and a youth center, all that could be planned in phases and created as a public/private partnership. Identifying a location for a facility encompassing all of the amenities listed above is a challenge. Mrs. Ochalla noted that Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital has expressed interest in this concept to promote health, wellness and safety. Mr. Retzky thanked the Community Center Committee representatives for coming to the meeting and sharing their progress and he assured them that the Rosemary Feasibility Study is a priority of the Commission.

**3. Assistant Director's Report: Ms. Peirce reported the following:**

- Summer registration began today and \$121,000 was collected
- The Community Gardens have been rototiled and planting has begun. A gardeners meeting is scheduled for 6:30PM on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Peirce interviewed the first Community Partner who will be paired up with the Broadmeadow School to oversee the school garden during the summer months.
- The Fishing Derby was held on May 5<sup>th</sup> and approximately 70 people attended.
- A Needham resident donated a tennis ball machine for the tennis programs.
- More efforts will be focused on marketing the programs and the pool using the newspaper with regular articles, the PATCH, the website and other methods. At this time social media applications are not available.
- Scott Groux is finalizing the plans for his Eagle Scout project at Perry Park where he will be fixing benches, clearing brush away from the basketball court, lining the basketball court with basketball lines and 4 square games as well as removing the asphalt path to nowhere. Scott is working with the Parks and

Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen on this project. He is hoping to complete it by the end of June 2012.

- The final Eco Explorer meeting will be held on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Peirce circulated an invitation to attend the Explorers Leadership Team, Green Rangers, Open House Celebration of the EPA Grant Accomplishments at the Mitchell School Outdoor Learning Center on Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm.
- Everyone is invited to attend Touch the Trucks on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from 10:00AM-12:00PM at the DeFazio parking lot.

**B. Hillside/Mitchell Feasibility Study:** Mr. Retzky, Mr. Jacob and Ms. Carey attended a meeting with representatives of the Selectmen, School Committee, PPBC, and Finance Committee and their department managers. The Town Manager had scheduled this meeting to get all boards talking together about the issues. Ms. Carey attended the Hillside/Mitchell working group meeting earlier in the day, and helped review a draft report that will be presented to the PPBC on May 21<sup>st</sup>. She also noted that the Superintendent is scheduling a small meeting with his School Committee facilities subcommittee and asking for representation from other boards if they would like to come to see a preview of the cost estimates. Mr. Retzky and Ms. Carey are not available, but Mrs. Chaston, Mr. Jacob and possibly Mr. DiCicco will attend. Some members of the Commission will try to the PPBC meeting, too. The School Committee will have a presentation on the same material at their June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mrs. Chaston proposed to write a letter to the School Committee and the PPBC to let them know now that the Commission is strongly opposed to using the Cricket site for anything other than it is being used for now. Mr. Retzky suggested having a Commission meeting on Tuesday, May 29, 2012 to review the May 17<sup>th</sup> superintendent meeting and the May 21<sup>st</sup> PPBC meeting. He also suggested that as a courtesy the Commissioners wait until the May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting to determine if a letter stating their position on Cricket Field will be written and sent.

**C. Town Meeting Preview:** Ms. Carey announced that the Citizens Petition: Organic Land Management Policy was not approved by Town Meeting. . Mr. Retzky will not be able to attend the May 16<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting session, so Mrs. Chaston will represent the Commission on any questions. Cash capital projects for DPW and the athletic facility fund are the two relevant articles to Park and Recreation, in addition to anything that might come up about the Newman playground. Mrs. Chaston asked how much it would cost to replace the synthetic turf fields. Ms. Carey estimated about \$600,000 for Memorial Park and \$900,000 for the two DeFazio synthetic turf fields.

**D. DeFazio Storage Building:** Ms. Carey reported that Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen has been working with the Town Engineer to finalize the DeFazio Storage Building bid to hopefully be posted next week.

**E. DeFazio Parking Lot:** Ms. Carey reported the bid came in at just under \$100,000 for the DeFazio parking lot. The funds will be transferred from the Finance Committee to DPW. The goal is to have the work done by the middle of June.

**F. Field Scheduling Update:** Ms. Carey noted that the wet weather has prevented many teams from playing games on the natural grass fields so make up games will have to be scheduled. She also indicated there are out of town groups using fields without a permit.

**G. Rosemary Pool:** The rain has delayed the pool from being painted. The goal is to have the pool painted over the weekend. Mr. Retzky suggested Ms. Carey meet with Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick in June to discuss the Rosemary Pool Feasibility Study.

**H. Trails Projects:** Ms. Peirce reported that at the Town Wide Clean up and Trail Clean Up Day held on April 28<sup>th</sup> over 950 lbs of trash was picked up at various locations around Town. On the same day, Ryan Collarusso completed his Eagle Scout Project clearing ½ of the Charles River Trail located at Ridge Hill. Ms. Peirce will be meeting with Mary Rizutto from the Needham Science Center at the Town Forest on May 17<sup>th</sup> to plan a field trip for the Needham second grade students to learn about trees and soil. Ms. Peirce shared a list of Projects Related to Trails with the Commissioners. The list included one day events and other long term projects that have been completed since 2008.

**I. Letter: Friends of Woods and Waters: re: Trail Priorities:** Mr. Retzky reviewed the letter from Mr. Sam Bass Warner and indicated he would respond indicating receipt of the letter.

**5. Action Items:**

**A. Special Event Request: Journal of Bone and Joint surgery:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the Special Event Request from the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery to host a summer outing on June 6, 2012 at Greene's Field from 10:00AM-2:00PM. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

**B. Support Naming of Newman Playground:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to support the naming of the Newman Playground in honor of former long serving Park and Recreation Commission member Phil Robey. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and the motion was approved. The Commissioners will send a letter of support to the School Committee.

**C. Meeting Dates:** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 29, 2012 and the following meeting will be held Monday, June 11, 2012.

6.      **Topics for future Agendas:** none presented
  
7.      **Adjournment:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:56PM.  
          Mr. Jacob seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:56PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP  
Assistant Director